

# *The Curse of the Gibeonites*

A cautionary tale, like the “ghost of Christmas yet to be”, it heralds to all of conservatism nested cozily in the paralysis of church life. Let the Word speak, as we still can avoid the curse of the Gibeonites, finding calling and courage.

*Joshua has moved through Jericho and Ai, as God keeps his promise to the Patriarchs to capture the entire Promised Land....*

## Joshua chapter 9

Now when all the kings west of the Jordan heard about these things—the kings in the hill country, in the western foothills, and along the entire coast of the Mediterranean Sea as far as Lebanon (the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites)—<sup>2</sup> they came together to wage war against Joshua and Israel.

Christ was a conquering King then, and still is today. In 1400BC, no hostile tribe or coalition could resist, bargain with or slow His progress. Still today, no pagan, irreligious world will stand against this movement. In the church world, no doctrines, boards, councils or denominational structures will keep Christ from conquering His land. The tribe themed in this teaching has a modern counterpart in our churches. Introducing the modern “Gibeonite”.

<sup>3</sup> However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, <sup>4</sup> they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. <sup>5</sup> They put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. <sup>6</sup> Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the Israelites, “We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us.”

This “ruse” is a form of diplomatic trickery. Much like how the Sanhedrin maintained a false peace with Roman rulers. The Gibeonites wanted Joshua's leadership to believe they were a distant tribe. Why? To avoid being “conquered”. Most leadership in conservative churches are this way—Godly older men, who have yet to be fully surrendered to Christ. They even recognize that God's boldest leaders are on a crusade to recapture the Promised Land. Christ intends to secure his Bride in this good land. Either unwilling, or unequipped, the conservatives have many things keeping them from embracing this conquest. Some are “worn-out sacks” (tired from ministry), and some are ineffective in their approach (“old wineskins”). The food supply (the programs, sermons and church life) is “dry and moldy”. The best food a conservative church has to offer, is merely a dry, moldy snack to men like Joshua and his companions. If you haven't noticed, they don't show up every Sunday.

<sup>7</sup> The Israelites said to the Hivites, “But perhaps you live near us, so how can we make a treaty with you?”

<sup>8</sup> “We are your servants,” they said to Joshua.

The conquering Christians are willing to make peace with the Gibeonites—under the condition that they are locals. You see, no trailblazer wishes to make enemies right where they live, or go to church. But these men offer cheap lip service to Joshua. They have one hand behind their back—they aren't in it to win it. They want to avoid any or all collateral damage in this conquest. They don't believe America was born in covenant to God. They don't believe America can be saved. To them, Messiah is not a conquering King today. He only conquers hearts—not territories. Christ is only a conquering King when he returns. Christ is a lamb they can keep in a sheep pen. It's safer. It's easier. It's predictable.

But Joshua asked, “Who are you and where do you come from?”

<sup>9</sup> They answered: “Your servants have come from a very distant country because of the fame of the LORD your God. For we have heard reports of him: all that he did in Egypt, <sup>10</sup> and all

that he did to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan—Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth. <sup>11</sup> And our elders and all those living in our country said to us, ‘Take provisions for your journey; go and meet them and say to them, “We are your servants; make a treaty with us.”’ <sup>12</sup> This bread of ours was warm when we packed it at home on the day we left to come to you. But now see how dry and moldy it is. <sup>13</sup> And these wineskins that we filled were new, but see how cracked they are. And our clothes and sandals are worn out by the very long journey.”

The Gibeonites had much to offer the conquerors. Caught off guard by their arrival and success (winning elections, taking roles of influence in local government), they were slow to embrace it. Practically, they were more than equipped. In fact, they were made for this. The bread represents the sword of the Spirit, or “the Word of God”. They had the men, and they had the bible. Still, the elders and the weak of faith preferred to keep it at home groups and in their churches. So the Word never became flesh, to dwell among them in battle. They thought eternal life was found in the scriptures, but would not dare to join the heroes standing among them.

The leaders had put “patches on their sandals” so braver men would think they had gone places Joshua had not; they collected coats for the refugees “old clothes”, but never thought their grandchildren might one day be displaced refugees. What a disrespectful offering to a conquering king—the King is not pleased.

<sup>14</sup> The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the LORD. <sup>15</sup> Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath.

Many “Joshuas” attend conservative churches and “sample the offerings” without asking God. The communion bread is a “cold moldy morsel”, because they never thought to “inquire of the Lord”. They never realized that their church never really had their back. The Gibeonites were forgiven, but not spiritually in covenant with Joshua. I guess they assumed a partnership, because they ate the moldy morsel wafer on Sunday. Joshua types never expected the “Gibeonites” to be fence riding Pharisees. Joshua’s troops are moving with Christ to hold public office. They work for defense companies. They battle in the front lines in the school classrooms and government buildings. They bring justice in the courts. What of Gibeon’s role? They have pastor’s meetings and set their own priorities. The men’s breakfast was hot, and the sermons were thoughtful and biblical, but the Gibeonites were not really with Joshua. So they “resorted to a ruse”. They somehow made peace in their hearts about the whole thing. There was no way in hell they could keep their 501c3, elder-board church, and conquer a city with Joshua. **The chiefs of the Gibeonites are not yoked to a conquering king.**

<sup>16</sup> Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them. <sup>17</sup> So the Israelites set out and on the third day came to their cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath Jearim. <sup>18</sup> But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel.

God did not wipe out Gibeon for their “ruse”. They survived. Why? Because they were in covenant with Joshua’s King. They were saved by the blood of the lamb. They weren’t much use in conquest, but they were after all, in Christ. And that is where Gibeonite pastors and Gibeonite sheep wish to reside—“in Christ”. This special place, this pew, this ministry...

Joshua’s conquest would prove successful, but no thanks to the Gibeonites. **God’s people simply couldn’t believe that these people lived in the same communities as them, but were unwilling to act like it.** The Israelites were baffled at the Gibeonites—Why? They were lying to themselves! They too were suffering under the same taxes, drugs, city politics, abortion laws, public school policies, no fault divorce laws, and not actively flowing into Joshua’s battle formations. Some even left the front lines as lawyers and teachers, to take a job at a church. For this, the Gibeonites deserved to be judged. Why? Because they lied to the conquerors. They feigned to be “far away”—in some other “kingdom of God” (church or ministry). They pretended to be too old, and worn out. They didn’t believe in conquest. They made a “false peace” with the crusaders...and so, these Gibeonites were anything but surrendered to Jesus. I don’t think God was asking for much. Like Ananias and Sapphira—any offering would have sufficed, but not at the cost of honesty.

The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders, <sup>19</sup> but all the leaders answered, “We have given them our oath by the LORD, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now. <sup>20</sup> This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, so that God’s wrath will not fall on us for breaking the oath we swore to them.” <sup>21</sup> They continued, “Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers in the service of the whole assembly.” So the leaders’ promise to them was kept.

Eventually the entire congregation was wondering just what these Gibeonites were doing all day. They were supposed to protect marriages, truth, and guide the flock into pasture. And Joshua was merely trying clear the way for good pasture! Israel was at war. Do you think Joshua's conquering Israelites had perfect marriages, squeaky clean lives or they all qualified to be elders? No. Still, God called His people to take ground.

<sup>22</sup> Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said, "Why did you deceive us by saying, 'We live a long way from you,' while actually you live near us? <sup>23</sup> You are now under a curse: You will never be released from service as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God."

When the "ruse" wore off, Israel was enraged at the lie. The Gibeonites lived smack dab in the center of the battles Joshua was fighting. In the Old Testament, it was hand to hand combat and no prisoners. Today? It's the school boards. The city council. The courtrooms. Public schools. The abortion battle in Indianapolis. The demonic assaults on every front. Where are God's people?

<sup>24</sup> They answered Joshua, "Your servants were clearly told how the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So we feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this. <sup>25</sup> We are now in your hands. Do to us whatever seems good and right to you."

To think they would have passed on this opportunity. To think they could have shipped this piping hot bread out of their stale synagogues—rushed the fiery Word of God to the front lines—to join a conquering King as he surrendered all our national enemies. That each tribe, church or denomination can throw their lot into the crusade, knowing that God has commanded it—that Christ was leading on horseback! To think that the Gibeonites, instead of enlisting their best men, would let Joshua's army assign them a "safe" job. And what exactly were their duties after they missed their calling?

<sup>26</sup> So Joshua saved them from the Israelites, and they did not kill them. <sup>27</sup> That day he made the Gibeonites **woodcutters and water carriers** for the assembly, to provide for the **needs of the altar** of the LORD at the place the LORD would choose. And that is what they are to this day.

From 1400 BC all the way to 2025. Over 3,400 years ago, and even now... "that is what they do to this day". They cut wood. They carry water. They build cabinets. They throw up sticks for Habitat for humanity. They pass out moldy bread in brand new sandals. They build props for the stage and Children's ministries. Wood cutters, cabinet makers, trailer pullers; young men stringing their maple wood guitar necks. Old men, locking and unlocking doors. Water carriers—coffee coolers, day in and day out. Door chair stackers, money and the rest.

What a sinful, synagogue The "needs of the altars" council is the altar, the the judge's bench; the never spoken with the down in Indy.

The armies of Joshua and the Lord has need of needed too. The donkeys have declared, revival tents oh America, dwelling places!"



were are running here! are left naked—the city school board is the altar, speakers of this house has speakers of *the* house

have arrived on donkeys, them! You friends, are prophets arriving on "how beautiful are your how lovely are your

The curse of the Gibeonites is laying back, and lying to yourself—in fearing the obvious change and necessary reforms, choosing the safe and easy church life, thinking it was a blessing, never knowing it was a curse.